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Maritime and coastal tourism workshop Barcelona 14 May 2007 report

A workshop on “Maritime and coastal tourism (MCT) in the EU” took place in Barcelona on 14 May 2007. The workshop was organised by the European Bureau for Conservation & Development (EBCD), with the support of the Government of Catalunya-DG Tourism, the European Anglers Alliance (EAA) and the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association (EFTTA) and in collaboration with the European Commission. This workshop was part of the ongoing consultation of the Green Paper on the future EU Maritime Policy.

The aim was to establish synergies between the maritime and coastal tourism sector and other maritime affairs, while ensuring **quality, environmental protection and competitiveness** for the sector in the long term, adhering to the principles of sustainable development.

The debate centred on how the maritime and coastal tourism sector and the plethora of its sub-sectors can feed into the future EU Maritime Policy.

Summary of interventions:

- Anna Terron, Secretary to the European Union, Generalitat de Catalunya: the Delegation to the EU of the Government of Catalonia has coordinated an interministerial task group to prepare a common proposal to take part in the consultation process launched by the EC regarding the Green Paper Towards a Future Maritime Policy for the EU. The task group has stated the need for designing an integrated action plan in order to promote the preservation and competitiveness of the maritime environment, underlining the importance of an active role of the regions regarding management and taking decisions in the frame of an integrated maritime policy.

- Emili Valdero, Secretary for Trade and Tourism, Generalitat de Catalunya: tourism is a fundamental economic activity which needs to be sustainable, competitive and of high quality and is an important tool in the future Maritime Policy.

WORKING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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- Tiago Cunha, Member of the Cabinet of the Commissioner for Fisheries & Maritime Affairs, European Commission: decision making in maritime affairs has to be improved by moving towards integrated management. We need to find ways to facilitate economic growth while respecting the environment. The fragmentation of decision making within the MCT sectors has to be replaced by a more coherent framework. Bureaucracy has to be significantly reduced. Air emissions from shipping is becoming of great importance and the EU is looking into this issue, but the industry also needs to address it if it wishes to remain competitive.

- Francesco Ianniello, Head of Unit, DG Enterprise, European Commission, Unit Tourism: the European Commission is working to make the tourism sector sustainable and competitive and integrate within it the Sustainable Development Strategy, by funding projects, identifying and disseminating good practice examples, provide indicators etc. Sustainable tourism has to involve economical and social viability without interfering with local cultures. MCT has to be accurately defined, so that indicators can be developed.

- Martin Fernandez Diez-Picazo, Maritime Policy Taskforce, European Commission: statistics and data on human activities are very important to better understand the MCT sector. It is difficult to involve all sectors in a thorough manner. Better port management will reduce the need for construction and expansion of ports.

- Paolo Costa, Member of the European Parliament, Chairman of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (ALDE Group), European Parliament: there is an interaction between tourism and Maritime Policy which the EU should look into how this symbiosis is most effectively used. Attention should be paid to environmental and consumer protection and the EU has to make the most of its competences, which are already stated in the Treaty. Regarding shipping, quality of fuels is important. Reorganisation of activities within a port will minimise negative impacts and maximize the positive ones.

- Marguerite Sequaris, Chief Executive Officer, The Confederation of National Associations of Hotels, Restaurants, Cafés and Similar Establishments in the European Union and European Economic Area (HOTREC): tourism should be paid full attention in the course of the development of an EU maritime policy. Large reaching partnerships, at the most appropriate levels, are keys for a sustainable and competitive development of the tourism industry in maritime/coastal/island areas. Whereas the EU Institutions should encourage actions to integrate tourism into the new EU maritime policy, it is essential that the principle of subsidiarity continue to be fully respected. Action needs to be taken now! (Theoretical questionnaires are not really useful).

- Esencan Terzibasoglu, Coordinator for Destination Management, World Tourism Organization: need to develop a destination excellence measurement system which will incorporate measurable and comparable indicators among

destinations. A harmonised framework should be promoted. The EU needs a vision for the future of tourism, which will include stronger leadership and commitment. The marine and coastal environment is a shared trans-national resource which requires States' cooperation. Regulation at international level regarding the issue of cruise shipping is essential.

- Marien Andre, Director Observatori de Turisme de Catalunya Generalitat de Catalunya: carrying capacity of communities and destinations should not be exceeded, and external effects should be controlled and measured, enhancing the positive ones and diminishing those negative. It is important to reduce seasonality of tourism by diversifying activities and changing traditional "sun and sand" tourism into a wider coastal and marine tourism model, which would involve more activities traditionally developed in the seafront. Establishing a code of conduct for tourists, citizens and enterprises could be useful, as well as sharing and learning from best practices.

- Kevin O'Connor, Facilitator of Irish Marine Tourism Strategy 2007-2013, Marine Institute, Public Services Centre: the three main pillars that emerged from report on Irish tourism and Leisure, which could also apply to the EU context, are: data research, education of stakeholders and spatial planning. Action in local and national level is fragmented. More coherence is needed. Diving, angling, sailing etc. should be given equal importance compared to shipping, cruising and boating.

- Eric Van Hooydonk, Lawyer, Chairman European Institute of Maritime and Transport Law, University of Antwerp: the Maritime Policy is a policy tool for integration of the different sectors involved. Ports should apply broad view of the responsibility towards society (pay attention to soft values).

- Stuart Carruthers, Secretary General, European Boating Association (EBA): tourism has been taken as destination oriented. Mobile tourism industries are hampered with regulations within the EU and this should be properly addressed. Member States should support international regulations of the IMO.

- Robert Marx, President, European Confederation of Nautical Industries – ECNI: research and data are required to confirm that recreational marine activities (mainly boating and marina-related activities) are not the main polluters of the marine environment.

- Phillip Pulver, President, Recreational Scuba Training Council, RSTC Europe: more consideration should be given to special interest groups in the future Maritime Policy. Reduction of mass tourism is required for the achievement of quality. Unified framework of qualifications throughout Europe for diving instructors is essential.

- Joan Carles Vilalta, Generalitat de Catalunya: land use problems should not be repeated within the marine spatial planning. Labour standards should be of high quality.

- Josep Anton Rojas, Head of Promotion and TourOperators Divisio, Turisme de Barcelona: congestion of ports is a challenge which cruise companies should face by coordinating their itineraries. Cruises are providing with important benefits to destinations, in terms of expenditure and socioeconomic activity.

- José Campos, Secretary General, MEDCRUISE: need for MCT construction along the coast can be displaced by cruise tourism which can be a more sustainable form of tourism. MEDCRUISE could assist in planning itineraries and encourage cruises to less congested ports. Green technology in the shipping industry should be promoted.

- Philippe VALLETTE, NAUSICAA Aquarium / World Ocean Network: it is essential to convince the citizen to be part of the Maritime Policy action plan. The World Ocean Network can convey messages of the Maritime Policy to the general public. Establish educational programmes for tourists in holiday destinations.

- Joaquin Romeo, Ejecutiva Hosteleria y Comercio, CC.OO. Trade Union Catalunya: quality and employment contracts should be obligatory. Business models, such as “all inclusive”, should be minimised. Training of employs is beneficial.

- Mirna CIENIEWICZ, Secretary General, European Confederation of Nautical Industries: existing infrastructures should be developed. Education in different professions could decrease tremendous lack in qualified workforce and help bridge gaps among different professions.

Best practices examples:

- Jan Kappel, Secretary General, European Anglers Alliance: *Ireland's Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007-2013; and a new strategy for Irish angling Tourism 2006-2009; development tools for European Tourism wished by EAA and EFTTA*: RECFISH project and a European one-stop angling web-portal: tourism resources have to be combined to ensure sustainability.

- Irena Radić Rossi Researcher Croatian Conservation Institute, Underwater Archaeology Dpt.: *Underwater cultural heritage*: there is a lack of interaction between scientific research and tourism. There is a need for education of the public and especially the tourist (i.e. divers).

- Cristina Prat, Cap Àrea de Turisme, Ajuntament de Torroella de Montgrí i L'Estartit / Clifford C. Wait Becerra, Manager, Fundación Espacios Naturales Protegidos de Andalucía (ANDANATURA): *fishing and tourism*: a campaign that raises public awareness of forgotten traditions reinforces local identities and enhances cooperation.

- Yaiza Fernández-Palacios Vallejo, Instituto Canario de Ciencias Marinas: *Tourism, islands and maritime policy*: Two good practice cases were explained: 1.- Awareness raising programs that involve general public in the conservation of natural and cultural values are very positive. The example of a biodiversity conservation program involving recreational divers and whale-watchers in the Canary Islands was given. 2.- Information collection on the state of the marine environment through sensors in buoys is a tool for various activities, from research or aquaculture to sailing or bathing water quality control. This kind of data must be made available to users. Red ACOMAR, an initiative run by the Canarian Institute of Marine Science was presented.

- Eric Van Hooydonk, Lawyer, Chairman European Institute of Maritime and Transport Law, University of Antwerp: *Port tourism, maritime policy and port policy*: port tourism as a tool for a restoration of the public image of ports and promotion of multi-faceted “soft values” (port history, architecture, recreation etc.).

- Ralf Scheibe, Project manager, University of Greifswald: *The Baltic Sea Region-Sustainability of a growing touristy destination*: integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) as key solution for existing problems in marine and coastal areas.

The main points that emerged were:

1. Any future Maritime Policy should not be conceived without involving the maritime and coastal tourism sector (MCT). An important chapter should be devoted to public awareness and education.
2. EU MCT has to compete with international destinations, regain the confidence of European consumers and address issues such as security of transport which can determine future influx of tourists. Maintain quality of services and the environment, in order to increase number of returning tourists, while ensuring that the carrying capacity of the local communities will not be exceeded and they will respond to the raising challenges. Many coastal destinations which have completed their life-cycle should be subject to rejuvenation. A vision reflecting how the EU will see tourism in the future is important; stronger leadership and commitment for product delivery is needed.

3. Various policies of the EU concerning the MCT should be linked but attention should be particularly paid to environmental quality and consumer protection.
4. A global alliance among institutions, academy, NGO's and stakeholders should be promoted by the EU.
5. The competences of the EU, conferred by the Treaty, should be used to strengthen-solve emerging problems, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity – stakeholder's involvement and partnerships should be forged at the proper level so the best decisions can be taken.
6. The EU needs a vision for the future to face the rapidly grown tourists' influx.
7. Individual sectors should apply their responsibility with a broader view towards society - attention should be paid to non-socioeconomic values (soft values and non-market value of the ecosystem's services).
8. Local development is intricately linked with MCT in a two way reaction and should be paid proper attention.
9. A framework of harmonised qualifications and training programmes throughout Europe for specific MCT industries (i.e. diving) should be established.
10. Ensure labour conditions go hand in hand with quality of services and are of high standards to ensure sustainability in the MCT sector.
11. MS should support and implement international regulations (i.e. regulation on flags of convenience at IMO level).
12. Take more into account the implementation of the maritime policy smaller sectors such as diving, angling and recreational fishing, which often are paid less attention compared to traditional sectors such as cruises and boating.
13. Areas of change (evolving economic trends, demographic changes on the coasts, climate change) should be foreseen and anticipated.
14. Ultra peripheral regions should be highlighted more within the Future Maritime Policy, as they are the responsible for the presence of the EU in the Indian Ocean and Caribbean Sea as well as in the Central East Atlantic, and from the point of view of MCT, they are important tourism destinations.

15. Care must be taken to ensure that new developments related to MCT (i.e. construction of new marinas) do not impact on natural / cultural values or are used to induce the uncontrolled building and occupation of the coast. Given the state of the Mediterranean coast (mainly Spain, Italy, Greece), this could be reflected in this new policy.

MECHANISMS-TOOLS

MCT should be substantial part of a more integrated European maritime policy, providing the needed mechanisms that, according to the Treaty and the principle of subsidiarity, based on a close stakeholders consultation and participation in the decision-making processes, and always taking into account the different geographical realities, promote a sustainable tourism sector that boost the economy and create jobs while at the same time, ensure the protection of the environment and the quality of life of the permanent residents and tourists.

1. Improvement of socio-economic and demographic data collection (improve comparability between regions) and production of statistics and indicators to better assess the sector and provide certainty to investors and policy makers.
2. Improve environmental data collection furthering the work of the European Monitoring Data Network and Atlas of the Sea compilation with respect to MCT activities.
3. Invest in science, research and technology. Decision-making process should be based in the best scientific advice. Research needed to establish the best tourism models considering environmental impact of the various MCT sectors (recreational boating, ports, cruises etc.), carrying capacity, effects of external factors on the sector (climate change). Research needs to address public perception issues of these sectors.
4. Reorganisation/combination, planning and synergies among activities to ensure increase in efficiency while minimising environmental impacts, seasonality, congestion, demographic pressures or other negative externalities. Support marine spatial planning (employ qualified staff in local authorities) and promote Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in a more consistent way.
5. Formation and maintenance of networks and exchange of best practices is vital for communication among stakeholders (i.e. central coordination of cruise ship itineraries to decrease congestion in ports, cooperation between researchers and operators, exchange between institutions from coastal regions with similar problems). EU funds could be made available.
6. Establish a destination excellence measurement system which would be based on quality indicators (measurable and comparable) for comparison of destinations, ensuring a harmonised framework.

7. The fragmentation of decision making should be replaced by a coherent regulatory framework. Red tape must be cut within Member States for regarding MCT (MS), promote an overarching policy such as the Maritime Policy and assist thus growth.
8. Sustainable destinations and businesses should be encouraged through education of stakeholders (community level and responsible tourists-consumers). Lead the citizen to be an actor, involve local population. Inform public and raise awareness (marine conservation and pollution issues). The Global Oceans Network could be used as a medium to convey messages. A code of conduct for citizens, tourists and enterprises should be established within
9. Working conditions, education and training in the MCT sector needs to be addressed. Bridge lack of access between professions with appropriate training.
10. Boast sense of local cultural heritage and identity as main resource of the MCT sector. Set up links between MCT and cultural and traditional activities (artisans, traditional fishing, etc).
11. Promote corporate social responsibility in the MCT enterprises. Promote green technologies such as the “green ship”.
12. Shift of accommodation mode of MCT from land to sea (cruises, yachts etc) can lead to decrease the need for coastal infrastructure development and might increase overall sustainability of the MCT sector. However negative impacts can not be reduced simply by displacing tourists from land to boats. Ports can be a vivid example of sustainable interaction between professional - recreational activities and how the negative image of an MCT component can be transformed.
13. Reconsider emerging tourist business models (all inclusive) and
14. Measures-incentives needed for the rejuvenation of European MCT destinations. Rebranding of MCT product required. Attract tourists from EU and international by deepening heritage and cultural roots and improving environmental status.

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